SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

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Kennedy Warns of Backlash Against Science's "Elitism"

With the National Science Foundation still reeling from its mauling by the House, and Senator Proxmire still sniping away, Senator Kennedy has warned biomedical scientists that their turn could also come unless they change their "elitist" attitude and recognize that the public has a right to help shape research policies.

Speaking at dedication ceremonies for new teaching facilities for the Harvard School of Public Health on May 9, Kennedy noted that medical schools are "terribly dependent upon public funds to continue and expand their activities."

"Public support," he said, "which implies confidence and trust, has become so substantial that many (medical schools) believe it is theirs by right. It is not. The plain truth is that the National Institutes of Health has been a 'sacred cow.' Those days are gone."

Noting that many areas of biomedical research, such as fetal research, psychosurgery, and genetic engineering, have recently given rise to public concern and debate, Kennedy suggested that the biomedical research community has "chosen to view public scrutiny as a threat to scientific independence. It has chosen to view public involvement in particular research areas as inappropriate and representative of a trend toward anti-intellectualism."

"The implication," Kennedy continued, "is that only scientists should determine how to spend public money, and that only scientists can ensure the ethics and safety of their research . . . I believe this elitist and acutely parochial approach does not serve the country well. It is an approach that will ensure continuing tension between the scientific community and the public."

As a case in point, Kennedy noted that the recent decision to suspend research on some kinds of genetic manipulation techniques and the subsequent conference which resulted in recommendations that the research could continue under strict controls (SGR Vol. V, No. 6), involved little public participation.

"It was commendable that scientists attempted to think through the social consequence of their work," he said, but "it was inadequate because scientists alone decided to impose the moratorium and scientists alone decided to lift it." He added, "It certainly is not clear to me that the ban should have been lifted when it was."

Though he didn't suggest how the public should be brought into policy decisions affecting biomedical research, Kennedy noted that the President's Biomedical Research Panel is now conducting a thorough review of the policies of the National Institutes of Health (SGR Vol. V, No. 9) and he said that a "major goal" of the review will be "to explore ways to bring the public into the process."

"I am not raising the spectre of having laymen pass judgment on scientific protocols," Kennedy said, but "there is certainly a role for the public in the evaluation of research at the frontier of medicine. So too must the public be involved in decisions regarding the application of new knowledge."

In a speech at Yale University last year, Kennedy promised that his health subcommittee would launch a thorough review of NIH policies, but that review will now await completion of the work of the biomedical research panel next Spring. A couple of weeks ago, Kennedy entertained members of the panel at a dinner, and his subcommittee may hold some hearings later this year to see

(Continued on page 2)

In Brief

Nasty rumor being spread around Washington by the tobacco lobby has it that Frank Rauscher, director of the National Cancer Institute, is a "closet cigarette smoker." Rauscher flatly denied it in response to an SGR query, saying he gave up cigarettes following the Surgeon General's 1964 report on *Smoking and Health.* **He smokes a pipe "now and then," he said.**

As for a **National Enquirer** *allegation that "51 percent of those on the executive floor of the National Cancer Institute headquarters building are puffing away on cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. . . ." Says a top NCI official, "I don't know where they got that number. It could be 50 or 53 per cent. But there's a lot of smoking here."*

Having scored a press clippings coup with his ridicule of NSF support of a project about–as he puts it–why people fall in love, Senator Proxmire is planning a monthly Golden Fleece Award for other projects that he deems wasteful of tax money. Meanwhile, he's been censured by the University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty for "irresponsible and inaccurate attacks" and for "damage to basic research and to freedom of scientific inquiry."

Recently arrived as Vice President Rockefeller's personal staff aide for domestic–including scientific–affairs is a 27-year-old ordained minister, Thaddeus Garrett Jr., who served for four years as chief assistant to Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.). A native of Akron, Ohio, Garrett continues to serve as an elected member of the State Board of Education of Ohio.

White House Science Advice: Clues But No Official Word

The imminence of a White House decision on the reorganization of presidential science advice has been so often reported in recent months that it is tiresome to report that a decision is still reported to be imminent. But such is the case.

The publicly available evidence, however, is minuscule–nevertheless, there are some signs of motion. Persons close to the situation say that when the reorganization announcement is made, it will involve the Domestic Council, and they point to several recent staff changes there as indications of something in the works.

Departing from the staff of the Council are Norman Ross, who was responsible for natural resources and some environmental matters, and Glenn Schleede, who looked after energy and scientific affairs. For the time being, at least, their duties will be handled by Kathy Ryan, an anthropologist, who came to the Council from Nelson Rockefeller's Commission on Critical Choices, prior to which she served as a researcher on the National Security Council.

It was Rockefeller who, immediately upon being sworn in, was asked by the President to examine the clamor that some leaders of the scientific community had been raising ever since Nixon divested himself of on-board science advisers.

The Vice President was asked to examine the various proposals that had been made for restoring a scientific presence to the White House, and to present a list of options. That was done, more or less in accord with the one-month deadline that accompanied the request, says the Rockefeller entourage, and now it is up to the President to make a choice. (SGR Vol. V, No. 2).

The basic reason for the delay, it seems, is that despite the belief of some scientists that Ford needs a science adviser or two or three, the President and his chief staff people do not feel impaired by the existing arrangement–which has the Director of the National Science Foundation doubling as presidential Science Adviser.

Both the Office of Management and Budget and the National Security Council are content with things as they are, since they possess what they consider to be adequate scientific counsel of their own. Redrawing the organization charts to accommodate possibly troublesome newcomers is not their idea of how to run the White House.

The position of the Domestic Council, however, is less clearcut, since that body is in the process of being taken over by Rockefeller associates, and they would no doubt like to have as much staff and jurisdiction as possible. Thus, the assignment of the science advisory function to the Council is more likely than not.

A major difficulty is that the clock is running out on the Ford Administration–it's just 16 months to election day–and that length of time is not going to be an attraction for the sort of senior scientific celebrities that the leaders of the community would like to locate on the White House staff. One possibility is that H. Guyford Stever might drop the NSF directorship and simply carry on with the science advisory role from a new office, but a Capitol Hill staff aide who claims to know, says that the Administration has given assurances that Stever is out of the running. In public, he is given high marks for performing well in a difficult organizational setup, but there is also a fairly widespread feeling that Stever is insufficiently combative for the rigors

(Continued on page 3)

Grant Disclosure Opposed

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has asked members of the Senate Health Subcommittee to amend the Public Health Service Act so that grant proposals submitted to the Federal Government would be kept secret except under special circumstances.

The proposed amendment would effectively cancel a decision of the US Court of Appeals which ruled last year that grant proposals are not exempted from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (SGR Vol. IV, No. 17).

But last week, in a speech at Harvard University, Senator Kennedy, the chairman of the Health Subcommittee, said that he will oppose the amendment. "To deny the public access to publicly funded research, which frequently involves human subjects, is unwise and unwarranted," Kennedy said, and he added that "a proposal such as this further undermines public trust and confidence in the scientific community."

The proposed amendment, outlined in a letter sent to Subcommittee members last month by AAMC President John Sherman, would keep research protocols secret until at least a year after they have been funded. But it would allow the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to waive the 12-month time period for protocols involving human experimentation.

KENNEDY *(Continued from page 1)*

how the panel's work is getting along.

Kennedy's call for more public participation in biomedical policymaking also fits in with a provision which he has attached to the version of NSF's authorization bill which was approved by the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare last week. The bill directs the Director of that agency to draw up a plan to involve the public in its policymaking.

Academy to Open up Committee Proceedings

After operating for 112 years in mole-like secrecy, the National Academy of Sciences has finally decided to allow a sliver of light into the workings of its government advisory committees. New guidelines, approved by the Academy's Council and now being written into regulations by the Governing Board of the National Research Council, would provide some public access to minutes of committee meetings and other documents, and they also provide for limited public participation during the early stages of committee deliberations.

The new guidelines, which were first announced by Academy President Philip Handler during his annual report to the membership last month, are a significant break with the Academy's traditional view that candor thrives in conditions of secrecy. But they fall well short of the standards of public disclosure required of other advisory committees of the federal government, and they also provide considerable latitude for individual committees to decide what information should be made public.

The new procedures, Handler said, arise "from our own belief that it is appropriate that our institution operate within the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Acts, to the extent that we can do so without loss of control over our own activities." And a later statement distributed by the Academy suggested that the guidelines are designed to provide some public access to committee deliberations while assuring that the committees are "shielded from undue pressures."

The guidelines would allow committees "if appropriate," to receive data, evidence and points of view from public and private groups during the initial stages of a study project. If a study is "of special topical interest," a public session could also be held. Normally, however, working committee meetings would remain closed.

After a report has been published, the public would be allowed access to the minutes or transcripts of meetings of study committees, panels or subcommittees; copies of information from outside sources; reports of panels and subcommittees; and comments received after the report has been published.

The guidelines do not say, however, whether such

(Continued on page 4)

ADVISE *(Continued from page 2)*

of White House infighting. Cited in this regard, for example, are Stever's efforts to appease critics of NSF's support of the curriculum development program known as MACOS (SGR Vol. V, No. 9) by withholding further funding pending a review. In the view of some, MACOS is a worthy product and instead of caving in to the loudmouth critics on the right, Stever should have stood up and defended the program.

In any case, it now appears that some of the scientists who felt pleased to think that the Administration valued their counsel on the issue of White House science advice are realizing that they were treated to a bit of a con job. In his chatty and personal newsletter, *Nick Nacks*, Alan C. Nixon, the maverick ex-president of the American Chemical Society, reports on a meeting that took place between a member of Rockefeller's staff and the Council of Scientific Society Presidents, which the former ACS chief founded to coordinate the public affairs efforts of some dozen of the nation's major scientific societies.

"While the meeting was useful and interesting," Nixon reported, "I was somewhat disconcerted to discover that the option paper had already gone to the President and there was little possibility that it would be recycled. However, we were no worse off in this regard," he continued, "than Messrs. (James) Killian (who chaired a National Academy of Sciences study recommending a White House Council on Science and Technology) and (NAS President Philip) Handler who had been in earlier in the week and a subcommittee from the American Society for Public Administration . . . ."

Nixon added that he shared the view of George Kistiakowsky, an Eisenhowers science adviser, "who wrote that he feels that the time is not appropriate to urge any further (if indeed it ever has been appropriate in the recent past) the creation of a Council on Science and Technology. The reasons are that we are too close to the next election; the hierarchy in the White House is already set; the Ford budget . . . will strictly limit new federal ventures in which COST might usefully function; it's no use forcing advice on a President who doesn't want it, so that opportunity is now past; thus the possibility is highly likely that Dr. Stever in his present role will be able to do more good for the country and for science than a low-powered COST. So, considering everything, George feels that it would be more appropriate to have the creation of COST be an item in the election platforms in 1977."

That's a reasonable assessment of the issue.

The Administration so far has remained silent about its plans, but early in June it will have an opportunity to state its position. The occasion will be hearings before the House Science and Technology Committee on a catchall bill titled the National Science Policy and Organization Act of 1975 (SGR Vol. V, No. 6). Included in that bill is a proposal to establish a 5-member Council of Advisers on Science and Technology. The Administration will surely have to say something about that and in the process should reveal its thoughts on White House science advice. –DSG

Easy Confirmation for Top Health, NIE Appointees

With official Washington preoccupied with many grim and weighty matters, three major appointments in the fields of health and education glided through Senatorial confirmation May 2 with little notice and few probing questions.

The appointees, by all accounts, are of high professional caliber: Theodore Cooper, as Assistant Secretary for Health in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Donald Fredrickson, to head the National Institutes of Health, and Harold Hodgkinson, as Director of the National Institute of Education (NIE).

The confirmation hearing took place before a 13-member subcommittee normally presided over by Senator Edward Kennedy, but the only Senators in attendance were Acting Chairman Harrison A. Williams (D-N.J.), Jennings Randolph (D-W. Va.), and Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada).

Considering the multiple troubles that currently envelop that government's health-related programs, and NIE's various close brushes with extinction in recent years, it might be thought that legislators would be swarming in to query the appointees. The fact is, however, that of the mere three Senators who attended the hearing, one or another was tiptoeing out and back in at various points.

Hodgkinson, who comes to the long-vacant NIE directorship from the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, was responsive to the few questions asked of him, but only one, asked by Laxalt, was of more than routine interest. The Senator, who bills himself as a conservative, took up the currently popular theme of the role of the National Science Foundation in social science research, and asked Hodgkinson to comment on NSF's role in this field. Hodgkinson replied that in the social sciences, NSF's activities "may not be of so high a caliber" as in the traditional sciences.

Hodgkinson said he hopes to achieve better coordination among the federal agencies concerned with research in education. Since everyone is for better coordination, regardless of what's involved, the matter was passed over and will probably not be heard of again.

Fredrickson, an NIH alumnus who returns there via the presidency of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, was questioned a bit about morale at NIH. He said there has been "some deterioration," and he hopes to improve matters. The main problem, he explained to the vague looking trio of Senators, is that scientists are sometimes deprived of the conditions that they consider "essential to the processes of discovery." There are some justifiable grounds for concern about "targeting" and priorities, he added, but, to even matters out, he said that scientists must realize that they have an obligation to help translate their work into "devices and treatments." He also said it is important for scientific resources to be used efficiently.

Cooper, another NIH veteran, became Acting Assistant Secretary of Health last December. Senator Randolph amiably rambled with him on the subject of rural health programs, and Laxalt, too, joined in on this theme. There was a bit of an exchange on whether Cooper's predecessor, Charles Edwards, could properly be described as "disenchanted" with the National Cancer Program. Cooper thought not, though he conceded that Edwards and others held serious reservations about the share of resources assigned to cancer research.

A few words were said about the problem of malpractice insurance, but the subject was dropped after Cooper explained that the Administration considered it to be primarily a matter for the states. Finally, there was a moderately illuminating exchange between Cooper and Williams concerning the budget of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. From the discussion emerged the disclosure that the Administration budget for NIOSH was $10 million less than the agency had sought for itself.

Williams referred to the problem of industrial carcinogens and noted that NIOSH was far behind schedule in setting standards for exposure. Cooper said he hoped for a speedup, and, with a few words of congratulations for the new federal officials, the hearing came to an end.

ACADEMY *(Continued from page 3)*

procedures should be applied to reports which have already been published. That question will be considered by the NRC's Governing Board when it writes the regulations. But an Academy official notes that committees may well be chary of releasing minutes and other information which had been provided under the Academy's old ground-rules.

The new guidelines could, however, be made redundant by a court suit filed against the Academy last year by the Public Interest Campaign. Designed to gain access to the records of the Committee on Motor Vehicle Emmissions, the suit contends that the Academy's committees should meet all the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, which include open meetings and public access to all information which isn't either classified or a trade secret.

The preliminary briefs on the suit have been filed with Judge John Sirica and a ruling is expected within the next few weeks.

Senate Bill Seeks Financial Aid for Nuclear Intervenors

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's recent announcement that it is looking into the possibility of providing cash aid to intervenors in its regulatory processes may offer a bit of hope that NRC won't perform entirely as a puppet of the nuclear industry (SGR Vol. V, No. 9), but a few Senators aren't yet willing to take that chance.

Last week Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) introduced a bill to make such cash awards mandatory in certain instances. The bill (S. 1665) is similar to a measure passed by the Senate last year as an amendment to the ERDA reorganization bill, but it was deleted in conference with the House.

When he introduced the measure, Kennedy suggested that "the end result of having public interest intervenors with access to adequate legal and technical experts will be final decisions more in the public interest and more acceptable to the public." And he noted that the Atomic Energy Commission last year refused three requests for financial assistance from intervenors, and one group has consequently been forced to pull out of a California hearing because of lack of funds.

Kennedy's bill would direct NRC to underwrite the legal costs of intervenors who can demonstrate that they are in financial need and that they are likely to add substantively to the regulatory proceeding. NRC would establish a ceiling for each proceeding, and the intervenors would have to share the cash between them – a provision which should help to consolidate opposition to specific power plants, and which could even shorten the regulatory process.

Though the bill specifies no overall funding level, it would establish a trial 3-year period during which payments are "not anticipated to be a major expenditure," Kennedy noted.

Even if NRC does decide independently to underwrite the costs of the anti-nuclear movement, Kennedy will still push his bill and, if the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy shows no signs of moving on it, he will probably propose it later this session as an amendment to a nuclear energy bill that's pending. For one thing, the bill would ensure that such payments will be made as a matter of course, and for another NRC is more likely to introduce its own reimbursement scheme with Kennedy's bill awaiting action in the Congressional wings.

Student Survey Finds Drop in Scientific Knowledge

An extensive survey of scientific knowledge among school-age children has come up with the so-far unexplained finding of a significant decline between comparable groups in the 1969-70 and 1972-73 school years. The drop during that period amounts to 2 per cent in science achievement scores, which, according to the managers of the survey, is the equivalent of half a year of "learning experience."

The survey, covering 90,000 students, was conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is part of the Education Commission of the States, a nationwide consortium of state education officials. The Assessment operates under a $4.5-million contract from National Center for Educational Statistics of the US Office of Education, and employs a staff of about 80 at its headquarters in Denver, plus various contractor organizations.

In testimony presented recently to the Senate Subcommittee on the National Science Foundation, J. Stanley Ahmann, staff director of the Assessment, reported that an analysis of performance of age groups 9, 13, and 17–which accounts for three-quarters of the 90,000 surveyed–found that on science and health-related questions "Almost all areas showed a decline."

In 1969, he reported, 84.6 per cent of the 13-year-old students "knew the commonly taught fact that malaria is carried by an insect. In 1972, only 77 per cent knew the correct answer.

"And while 60.1 per cent of the 17-year-olds tested in 1969 knew that a transformer changes the voltage of an electric power supply, only 46.6 per cent could correctly answer the question in 1973."

"Based on the estimated 3.5-million school-age students represented by each group tested," Ahmann reported, the results also showed:

- Approximately 65,000 fewer 9-year-olds nationally could answer a typical science question correctly in 1973 than could in 1970." The drop was 70,000 and 80,000, respectively, for the 13- and 17-year-old students.
- At age 17, the big-city students show the greatest decline, dropping from just above the national average to 2 per cent below.
- Inner-city areas are well below the nation and are not improving.
- The percentage of rural students who could answer a typical science question increased at all three age levels, a

(Continued on page 6)

GAO Cites Blocks to Geothermal Resources Development

Lack of information on the extent and nature of geothermal energy resources, coupled with a number of problems associated with the federal government's leasing programs, are delaying the production of electrical energy from geothermal deposits, according to a study published recently by the General Accounting Office (GAO).

Though estimates of the potential contribution that geothermal resources may make to electricity generation vary widely – from a low of about 4000 MW to a high of 132,000 MW by 1985 – and the technology for exploiting most deposits is yet to be developed, GAO reckons that some energy companies may be deterred from putting in bids to lease potential geothermal lands because they are not sure whether there is any exploitable energy there.

The report (*Problems in Identifying, Developing and Using Geothermal Resources* RED-75-330, available from GAO, Washington D.C. 20540, $1) states, for example, that "Geothermal experts, even within the Geological Survey (which administers the leasing program), disagree about the value and even the existence of geothermal resources within some designated areas."

With such uncertainty, GAO points out, it is not surprising that private companies have been reluctant to bid for leases in areas that may or may not contain geothermal deposits, and it therefore recommends that the federal government should step up its resource assessment program.

Another problem noted in the report is that it may be possible for a company to buy up a lease on a potential geothermal resource, and then do nothing to exploit it. The report notes, for example, that it costs about $800,000 to sink a single exploratory well in a hot steam or brine deposit, yet the conditions specified in the government's leases require a minimum of only about $166,000 to be spent in 10 years.

In that context, it is noteworthy that most of the geothermal resource areas leased in California are now in the hands of large oil companies, according to a survey published last November by the *Los Angeles Times*. Though that may not be too surprising, there is some concern that the oil companies may not be competing vigorously against each other in exploiting the resources.

TEST SCORES *(Continued from page 5)*

trend that, if it continues, could bring rural students up to the national average by 1983.

- Suburban students at all three age levels performed above the national level, although their rate of performance is declining at the same rate as the nation's.
- Males and females declined at all three age levels in answering typical science questions. The performance of 9-year-old boys was 2-3 per cent above that of girls, 13-year-old boys perform 4 per cent above girls, and at age 17 the average male outperforms the average female by 6 per cent.

The report attempts no explanation of the findings, only "speculation" that "The declines between 1969 and 1973 may only suggest that unusual emphasis was given to science education in the wake of Sputnik. However," it points out, "lower scores on several other national tests also suggest a general education achievement decline."

If, indeed, the school-age population is getting dimmer on things scientific, this would seem to be a matter that warrants further exploration. Ahmann told SGR that the Assessment is discussing followup studies with NSF and the National Science Teachers Association.

The Assessment is now preparing for publication a detailed report of its findings. In the meantime, it has published a preliminary report, *National Assessment of Science, 1969-73: A Capsule Description*, available without charge from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1860 Lincoln St., Suite 700, Denver, Colorado 80203.

In Print

Recent publications of more than routine interest:

Critical Mass, new, monthly newspaper of the Citizens Movement to Stop Nuclear Power; contains original material as well as reprints of articles of interest to the anti's. (Individual subscriptions, $6 domestic, $10 foreign; institutional, $30 and $34. Address: Critical Mass, Box 1538, Washington, DC 20013).

Experiments and Research with Humans: Values in Conflict, proceedings of a public forum held last year by the National Academy of Sciences. (224 pages, $5, Printing and Publishing Office, NAS, 2101 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418).

Appropriation Recommendations for Federal Health Programs FY 1976, An Alternative to the President's Proposal, annually presented "counter budget" of the Coalition for Health Funding, consisting of some 40 national organizations interested in government health affairs; concludes that the Ford budget is niggardly and offers its own suggestions for adequate spending. (51 pages, no charge, Coalition for Health Funding, Suite 931, 1346 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036).

EPA Report Infuriates Nuclear Breeder Proponents

The Environmental Protection Agency has dealt what could turn out to be a serious blow against the liquid metal fast breeder reactor (LMFBR) by suggesting that commercial introduction of the reactor could be delayed for up to 12 years without reducing the economic benefits which have been claimed for it.

The suggestion has infuriated supporters of the LMFBR on Capitol Hill. Senator John Pastore (D-RI), chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE), angrily claimed last week that EPA's statements are "now being used by the opposition" to block R&D funds for the LMFBR program, and he announced that "as a matter of fact, I am beginning to feel that this program is doomed."

Consequently, Pastore and Rep. Mike McCormack (D-Wash.) have made EPA Administrator Russell Train promise to write them an open letter stating that EPA isn't recommending a delay in R&D on the breeder, and that the agency in fact supports rapid development of an LMFBR demonstration plant. They need such a letter, they said, to help ward off attacks on the program when its authorization is debated in the House and Senate.

EPA's heretical suggestion was contained in a critique, made public by EPA late last month, of an environmental impact statement on the LMFBR program. EPA pointed out that the Atomic Energy Commission, which prepared the impact statement, had used outdated projections for energy demand in the United States. If more recent projections are used, EPA said, there is less need to proceed with the LMFBR program at breakneck speed.

The nub of the matter is that the chief argument for the LMFBR is that its ability to convert non-fissile uranium into plutonium will be vitally needed to eke out dwindling domestic uranium resources. Without the LMFBR, the argument goes, development of nuclear power will be severely constrained because conventional light water reactors will start running out of fuel in about 50 years.

But, because recent energy demand projections are much lower than those on which the AEC based its justification for the breeder, EPA concluded that "a delay of four to twelve years in the commercialization of the LMFBR might be accommodated without significantly reducing the uranium conservation value of the LMFBR." EPA also noted that "In our opinion, the time needed to resolve the environmental and safety questions associated with the LMFBR program may be greater than that provided in recent scheduling." AEC's impact statement suggested that the first commercial LMFBR would be operating in 1987.

EPA said that its critique "should not be construed as indicating that EPA is necessarily advocating a delay." But opponents of the breeder have long maintained that AEC used overblown energy demand estimates and unrealistically low projections of domestic uranium resources to promote the LMFBR program, and they have naturally seized on the statement as helpful ammunition. And, sensing that EPA's critique will be used in Congress as an argument for reducing funding for the LMFBR, Rep. McCormack asked Train to appear before his special JCAE subcommittee on the breeder to justify EPA's conclusions.

Under hostile questioning, Train protested that EPA isn't recommending a delay in the LMFBR program, that its remarks applied only to commercialization of the LMFBR and said nothing about the timing of the demonstration plant now being planned in Tennessee, and that he in fact supports early operation of the demonstration plant so that its environmental effects can be measured.

Pastore and McCormack then said that they wished EPA had made its statement a little less quotable for "the opposition" and asked Train to provide them with some quotable material as well.

As it happened, though, they were provided with some very quotable material from Frank Zarb, Administrator of the Federal Energy Administration, the agency whose demand projections EPA used in its critique of the LMFBR impact statement. Zarb told the committee in a written statement that FEA's long-range demand estimates aren't worth very much. "Any projections of what might happen 25 to 45 years from now are highly speculative," he said,

(Continued on page 8)

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Nerve Gas Funds Deleted By Senate Committee

Opponents of the US Army's scheme to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to replace its chemical weapons stockpiles with a new generation of binary nerve agents have scored their first major victory this year. Last week, the Senate Armed Services Committee deleted funds for R&D on binary weapons from the military authorization bill, and the Committee also adopted an amendment proposed by Senator Gary Hart (D-Colo.) which would prohibit production of any new offensive chemical weapons.

If the amendment survives intact it would probably kill the binary program at least for another year. Though the authorization bill deals only with R&D funds, supporters of the amendment believe that the language prohibiting production of new offensive chemical weapons would also squash the Army's plan to begin building special shells to carry the binary agents (SGR Vol. V, No. 7).

The Senate will probably approve the amendment – Armed Services Committee chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) is said to have voted for it and it has the support of Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) – but the prospects in the House are not so good. For one thing, the House Armed Services Committee has approved the request for R&D funds, and for another the Army has been trying hard to sell the program to some key House members.

If the amendment is deleted in conference committee, then opponents of the binary program will try to remove funds for production of binary shells from the military appropriations bill.

NIH Unit Renamed

NIH's National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke has been renamed the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke – NINCDS, for short. The name change, part of a general reorganization of the Institute's programs, reflects the organization's responsibilities for research and treatment concerning disorders of hearing, language, and speech. As part of the reorganization, Wesley H. Bradley, clinical professor of otolaryngology, Upstate Medical College, Syracuse, NY, has been appointed to head a new Communicative Disorders Extramural Research Program.

BREEDER *(Continued from page 7)*

and added that "we should not base an important, current energy decision on the breeder on such projections".

A few days after members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy had persuaded EPA Administrator Russell Train to tone down EPA's critique of the economics of the LMFBR program, Rep. Morris K. Udall (D-Ariz.) announced that he would launch a separate inquiry into the merits of the breeder program. Udall, a presidential aspirant, announced that his subcommittee on energy and environment of the House Interior Committee has scheduled hearings on the LMFBR program, for June 2, 5 and 6.

Noting that "total funds for all non-nuclear energy programs amount to less than that allocated to the breeder alone," Udall said that "at issue, then, is the question: should we pour by far the largest share of all our energy eggs into the breeder basket?"

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